

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 1 1 4 2

EO 11652GDS

TAGS: BAGB, EGEN, ETRN, UR

SUBJ: PORT CONDITIONS AT LENINGRAD

REFS: A) LENINGRAD 1089 B) STATE 165002

1. SUMMARY. RECENT VISIT OF FEDERAL MARITIME COMMISSIONER KARL BAKKE PROVIDED CONGEN OFFICERS WITH CHANCE TO TOUR LENINGRAD PORT AND GAIN UPDATED FIRST-HAND IMPRESSION CURRENT STATUS GRAIN OFF-LOADING. VISIT CONFIRMED REPORTED BACKLOG GRAIN SHIPS, WITH 10-12 SHIPS -- "MAJORITY" U.S. -- CURRENTLY AWAITING OFFLOADING AND NORMAL UNLOADING DELAYS OF TWO WEEKS AND BEYOND. PORT AUTHORITIES REPORT NO RAIL CAR SHORTAGES OR OTHER ONWARD SHIPMENT PROBLEMS AT THIS TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. CONGEN OFFICERS RUECKERT AND SVAT TOOK PART IN TOUR OF LENINGRAD PORT JULY 16, HOSTED BY LENINGRAD PORT DIRECTOR GENERAL OLEL A. TEREHOV AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL MIKHAIL A. RIAZANOV IN HONOR OF VISIT TO LENINGRAD OF FMC CHAIRMAN KARL E. BAKKE. DURING TOUR, FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON GRAIN OFFLOADING AND ON LENINGRAD PORT FACILITIES WAS DEVELOPED.

3. ACCORDING TO PORT MANAGER, FOUR BERTHS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE TO OFFLOAD GRAIN. LARGEST GRAIN SHIP WHICH CAN BE ACCOMMODATED AT BERTHS IS QTE 60,000 TONS UNQTE. ACCORDING TO PORT DIRECTOR GENERAL, CONFIDENTIAL

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10-12 GRAIN SHIPS, "MAJORITY OF WHICH ARE U.S.", CURRENTLY AWAITING

UNLOADING. DIRECTOR STATES THAT PORT CAN OFFLOAD UP TO 6,000 TONS OF GRAIN PER DAY AND, AS ROUGH RULE OF THUMB, PORT UNLOADS ONE GRAIN SHIP PER DAY, PUTTING AVERAGE DELAY BEFORE OFFLOADING CURRENTLY AT AROUND TWO WEEKS. THIS, HOWEVER, IS SOMEWHAT MORE OPTIMISTIC UNLOADING ESTIMATE THAN THAT GIVEN TO US RECENTLY BY U.S. CAPTAIN WHO CLAIMED UP TO THREE WEEK DELAY. IT IS NOTeworthy IN THIS RESPECT THAT DESPITE CLAIMS OF FOUR AVAILABLE BERTHS, CONGEN OFFICERS OBSERVED ONLY ONE GRAIN VESSEL, U.S.- OWNED OVERSEAS ALEUTIAN, CURRENTLY ACTUALLY BEING OFFLOADED.

4. LENINGRAD PORT NOW HAS NO RPT NO FACILITIES FOR STORING GRAIN. LAST REMAINING FORMER SILOS NOW IN FINAL STAGES OF BEING RAZED. THUS FOR GRAIN ONLOADING TO PROCEED SMOOTHLY, RAIL CARS MUST BE AVAILABLE AND PORT DIRECTOR NOTED THAT THIS HAS NOT BEEN PROBLEM AT PORT. OFFLOADING AT BERTH ACCOMPLISHED BY VACUATORS DIRECTLY INTO LARGE HOPPER WHICH FUNNELS GRAIN INTO SPECIALLY DESIGNED TOP LOADING GRAIN CARS. WE WERE TOLD THAT, WHEN SUFFICIENT NUMBER THESE SPECIAL RAIL CARS NOT READILY AVAILABLE, NORMAL BOX CARS MODIFIED TO PERMIT TOP LOADING ARE UTILIZED, AND A NUMBER OF THESE MODIFIED RAIL CARS WERE OBSERVED IN PORT AREA. PORT DIRECTOR HAD HIGH PRAISE FOR OVERALL COOPERATION BETWEEN PORT AND LENINGRAD RAILWAY AUTHORITIES. HE STATES THAT, WHILE PORT DOES NOT HAVE AUTOMATIC OVERALL PRIORITY FOR RAILCARS, IT HAS NO PROBLEM RECEIVING PRIORITY AUTHORIZATION FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES SUCH AS CURRENT HANDLING OF GRAIN SHIPMENTS. PORT DIRECTOR ALSO CLAIMS TURNOVER OF CARS AT PORT IS HANDLED "WITH EXCEPTIONAL EFFICIENCY" BY RAIL AUTHORITIES.

5. THERE ALSO IS SOME OFFLOADING OF GRAIN INTO TENDERS IN OUTER HARBOR, ALTHOUGH PORT DIRECTOR TENDED TO PLAY THIS DOWN STATING THAT THIS NORMALLY RESERVED FOR VESSELS WHICH TOO LARGE TO BE EASILY ACCOMMODATED AT BERTH. PORT DIRECTOR INDICATED THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO GRAIN OFFLOADING INTO SMALLER SHIPS INTENDED FOR INLAND SEAWAYS, STATING THAT NORMAL PROCEDURE IS FOR LARGER SOVIET SEA-GOING INLAND WATERWAY SHIP TO PICK UP GRAIN CARGO DIRECTLY OVERSEAS AND PROCEED DIRECTLY INTO INLAND WATERWAYS RATHER THAN TRANSLOADING GRAIN ONTO SMALLER SHIPS AT LENINGRAD PORT.

CONGEN OFFICERS NOTED THAT, IN WEEK PERIOD SINCE LAST RAIN
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IN LENINGRAD, TREES AND BUILDINGS IN GRAIN OFFLOADING AREAS HAD BECOME HEAVILY COATED WITH GRAIN DUST AND THAT CONSPICUOUS DUST CLOUD HOVERING OVER U.S. SHIP BEING UNLOADED. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, PORT MANGER STATES THAT THERE ARE VIRTUALLY NO SOVIET ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS OR RESTRAINTS EFFECTING OFFLOADING OF GRAIN WHICH WOULD TEND TO COMPLICATE OR SLOW DOWN GRAIN UNLOADING PROCEDURES.

7. THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE LENINGRAD PORT MAY ALSO BE OF INTEREST TO ECONOMISTS FOLLOWING CURRENT GRAIN AND OTHER U.S. CARGO DELIVERIES TO SOVIET PORTS. ACCORDING TO TERHOV, LENINGRAD PORT STRONGLY COMPETING WITH BLACK SEA PORTS AS BUSIEST IN SOVIET UNION. WORKING AREA OF PORT, WHICH SITUATED ON SERIES OF NATURAL ISLANDS AND LANDFILLS, ENCOMPASSES 400 HECTARES OF LAND AREA AND PORT HANDLES APPROXIMATELY 10 MILLION TONS GENERAL CARGO EACH YEAR. PORT EMPLOYS 8,000 WORKERS ON YEAR ROUND BASIS, ALTHOUGH ICEBREAKERS NEEDED IN WINTER TO KEEP PORT IN OPERATION AND HARBOR ACTIVITIES SOMEWHAT REDUCED DURING WINTER MONTHS (LAGE NOVEMBER-APRIL).

8. ENTRANCE TO PORT IS THROUGH SINGLE MAIN CHANNEL WHICH IS PROTECTED FROM NORMAL HEAVY SILTING OF RIVER NEVA BY TWO PARALLEL 7 KILOMETER LONG DIKES. DIKES KEEP CHANNEL RELATIVELY SILT FREE REQUIRING ONLY OCCASIONAL DREDGING, USUALLY FO FURTHER DEEPEN CHANNEL WHICH NOW CAN ACCEPT SHIPS WITH UP TO 10 AND ONE-HALF METERS. PORT MANAGER EMPHASIZED THAT UNDER CURRENT PLANS LENINGRAD WILL REMAIN STRICTLY A DRY CARGO PORT. THERE ARE NO FACILITIES FOR HANDLING OIL, OTHER THAN THE USUAL TANKS FOR HANDLING BUNKERING FULE AND THERE CURRENTLY ARE NO PLANS TO BUILD OIL HANDLING FACILITIES HERE.

9. THE PORT IS DIVIDED INTO FOUR PARTS :A) EXPORT AREA; B) OFF-LOADING AREA FOR GENERAL DRY CARGO, INCLUDING GRAIN; C) A TIMBER AREA CURRENTLY BEING ONLY LIGHTLY UTILIZED AND D) THE CONTAINER PORT WHICH NOW IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING MODERNIZED AND EXPANDED WITH A PROJECTED 1980 COMPLETION DATE. THE PORT MANAGER POINTED OUT WITH MUCH PRIDE THAT NEW CRANES AND CONTAINER HANDLING EQUIPMENT IN THE NEW CONTAINER AREA ARE OF FINNISH MANUFACTURE.

10. EACH SECTION OF THE PORT IS WELL SUPPLIED WITH RAIL LINES PERMITTING DIRECT OFF-LOADING ONTO RAILCARS AND THE PORT REPORTEDLY CONFIDENTIAL

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IS ABLE TO TURN OVER UP TO 1,000 RAIL CARS DAILY. EIGHTY PERCENT OF ALL OFFLOADED CARGO DEPARTS THE PORT AREA BY RAILCAR WITH THE REMAINING 20 PER CENT BEING HANDLED BY INLAND CHANNEL SHIPS AND TRUCKS. THE PORT IS 85 PER CENT MECHANIZED.

11. COMMENT: IN DISCUSSION OF CURENT GRAIN SHIP PILE UP WITH CONGEN OFFICERS, PORT DIRECTOR DID NOT PROJECT IMPRESSION THAT HE GIVING ANY PARTICULAR CONCERN OR URGENCY TO PROBLEM. HE SEEMED STILL TO VIEW CURRENT BACKLOG OF GRAIN SHIPS AS TEMPORARY, UNUSUAL CONDITION TO BE HANDLED WITHIN NORMAL WORK PATTERNS OF PORT, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOTE AT ONE POINT THAT ADDITIONAL AREAS OF PORT COULD BE PRESSED INTO SERVICE UNLOADING GRAIN IF NECESSARY. PORT DIRECTOR SEEMED TO TAKE BACKLOGGING IN STRIDE. HE NOTED TO CONGEN OFFICERS AT ONE POINT THAT PORT CAN HANDLE UP TO 20 SHIPS OVERALL AT ONCE, BUT SAID THAT AT TIMES AS MANY AS 50 SHIPS ARE

ON HAND TO ENTER PORT.
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